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EDITORIAL

We are indeed very happy to hear that the Government of Tamil Nadu has decided to open more English Medium Sections in the High Schools. At the time Tamil was made the main medium of instruction it was hoped that it might lead to an improvement in the pupils' standard of attainment in English since they would be freed from the strain of learning non-language subjects through a foreign medium and they could devote greater time and attention to the study of English. But this hope has not been fulfilled as the scope for reading books written in English was confined to a single prescribed textbook and the students were exposed to English, if at all, for only six periods in a week. With a growing awareness of the need for competence in English many parents send their children to the unrecognised so-called 'English Schools' run by individuals or bodies whose sole concern is to make a fast buck. The rush to such schools may be stemmed by the new decision of the Government.

In the new context another important step must be taken by the Government. The 'Readers' prescribed for detailed study in the English medium sections must not be the same as those for the Tamil medium sections. Their 'Readers' need not be based on the graded structures and limited vocabulary, since they have to learn other subjects like History, Geography, Natural and Physical sciences by studying books written in uncramped English. Further, teaching of English must be entrusted to only those strong in English both in language and techniques.

Greater attention must also be paid to pull up the standard of students in Tamil medium sections. Along with the Reader they must be provided opportunities to study at least half a dozen English books in each class. They must be induced and encouraged to make a better use of the library facilities available in the school. News bulletins and English lessons broadcast by the All India Radio must be listened to by the students. The use of B.B.C, or Linguaphone records and Tape recorders will also bring about a definite improvement. We hope the Government will come forward with liberal grants to provide these essential facilities, for only then it can realize its aim to raise the level of pupils' attainment in English.

In this issue, Prof R Sudarsanam continues his report on the innovations introduced by him in his university. He has earlier dealt with the Reading Process, The Reading Materials and the Reading Errors in his article on "Psycholinguistics and Receptive Dynamics". Now he presents a detailed discussion on 'Reading Instruction'. This article will be continued in the next issue as well, as it is too long to be confined to one.

D. Rajaganesan puts forth a new strategy for the teaching of English in Schools. The importance of audiovisual aids in teaching English cannot be overestimated. To carry out his plan in full may involve a lot of money and time but one can certainly make a beginning at least in respect of difficult structures and 'hard' words.

Prof. S. Jagadisan has discussed briefly the origin and the place of slang. He has thrown fresh light on an obscure aspect of English language.

Prof. K. Panchapagesan has given some concrete suggestions to improve the teaching of English at the college level. The days of lecturing to large classes are over and if students are to derive any benefit, it is necessary that college teachers also should employ new techniques so as to make the English lessons more interesting and purposeful.

A LESSON IN READING INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS OF SCIENCE IN COLLEGES

By

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This is a continuation of the article "Psycholinguistics and Receptive Dynamics" published in volume IX No. 1 (January-Februaty. 74) of this journal. The earlier article dwelt at length on reading and listening in terms of 'Psycholinguistics'. The discussion was presented under four broad areas, viz.,1) The Reading Process, 2) The Reading Materials, 3) The Reading Errors and 4) The Reading Instruction. A short summary relating to the first three areas discussed in the article is given below followed by a detailed discussion on 'Reading Instruction'.

1. *The Reading Process* : This is reflected in the student's i) choice of behavioural strategies aimed at achieving the purposes of reading and ii) the reader's state of mental dynamism a)to recall his basic knowledge in the subject as expressed by key words, collocations, etc.,b) to get into the line of thinking of the writer by identifying and responding mentally to visual linguistic cues and c) to interpret and integrate the 'new' knowledge with his 'known' knowledge. "Reading is a Psycholinguistic process by which the reader (a language user) reconstructs, as best as he can, a message which has been encoded by a writer as a graphic display". (Kenneth S. Goodman, 1970). Constucting meaning is a vital pre-requisite of all reading (Jenkinson D Marion, 1973). This is possible only in the context of the reader's ability to follow a line ofthinking, problem-solving or reasoning; for words, structures and

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discoursal forms get combined only according to the needs of particular lines of thinking. In science, these forms of thinking are identifiable; while in literature all these lines of thinking are intertwined and compounded. If a student develops the ability to pursue the particular line of thinking of the writer, he can successfully construct meaning, interpret meaning and evaluate meaning —which together constitute the Reading Process.

2. *The Reading Materials*: The materials have to be such that a) they represent different discourse forms of communication written by scientists in areas relevant to their subjects of study, b) the contents are not only within the reach of the knowledge of the students but also interesting enough to create a love for and curiosity to read through for gaining the 'new' knowledge, c) the discoursal logic of the material is straight and simple enough to allow the students to get into the line of thinking of the author and d) the linguistic features are such that experience in particular syntactic. semantic and stylistic usages (specific aim of each lesson) may be imparted.

Controlling the lines of thinking appears to give the students an assured guidance in identifying the visual cues and developing a sense of 'expectancies' for learning to read meaningfully, "It is only by reading for meaning first that there is any possibility of reading individual words correctly" (Frank Smith, 1973) "Understanding of the reading process must depend on understanding how language works and understanding how language is used, that is, how language and thought are interrelated (Kenneth S. Goodman, 1969).

3. *Errors in Reading*: The existing failure of the students in learning to read may be analysed in terms of their inability a) to follow a suitable reading strategy.........different reading-rates and methods like skimmed reading, SQ 3R (surveying, questioning, reading, reciting and recalling) etc., according to the form of communication and the purpose of reading (to collect new information, to make inferences, to evaluate, etc., b) to segment nominal phrases and verbal phrases properly at inter-and intra-levels of sentences for locating the headwords, etc., for decoding

the meaning properly and c) to get into the line of thinking of the writer for responding mentally to cues of cohesive features and discoursal logic, like topics. sub-topics (given or implied)., etc., which may be present at inter-and intra-levels of paragraphs.

4. *The Reading Instruction:* This article deals with this aspcct and presents one of the lessons, "How plants sense Gravity", used in the Reading Course offered in the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore. The attention of the reader is drawn to tables 1 and 2 in Vol. IX No. 1., (P113–34) of this journal for an understanding of how the first three dimensions of reading have been integrated in the form of suitable syntactic and semantic aims and of suitable discourse forms for the course in 'Receptive Dynamics'. The following steps in reading instruction emerge from ihe interactions of the above three dimensions of the Reading activity. A course in reading instruction at the collegiate level should accordingly organise a programmed practical guidance in these aspects of reading.

The Organisation: There should be a

(i) pre-reading strategy with a few pre-questions a) which may help the reader recall and organise his 'known' information in the form of key words. collocations, principles, etc,, relating to the content of the material and b) which may orient him to the line of thinking of the writer for developing a sense of discoursal logic and of linguistic expectancies,

(ii) a systematic training in skimmed reading for building up a sense of linguistic awareness in the students so that they may learn 1) to perceive a) the level (technical or non technical) of writing, b) the purpose of the communicated matter (to inform, to instruct or to persuade), c) the logic of the discoursal form and d) the presence af redundancies and 2) to decide on the nature of his reading strategy for a high rate of comprehension i.e., a) the degree of "attention' and b) the 'manner" of reading (for making forward and backward references, for evaluating the choice of key words, etc.,) required for sustaining his interest and cognitive participation in reading

through the passage. The students should be given systematic training in skimming over a, the nominal phrases. b) the verbal phrases. c) the cohesive features and d) the structural cues,

(iii) a few questions on post-reading comprehension of the passage (on facts, 'processes. numbers, etc.,) relating to the student's understanding, interpretation and integration of the new knowledge with his knowledge at entry,

(iv) a few programmed exercises on a) vocabulary and usage, b) discoursal logic and cohesion c) syntax d) analysis and synthesis of phrases und sentences (T. G. model) e) pronunciation and spelling, f) reference study (use of abbreviations, acronyms, formulae, dictionary etc.,) and g) work-sheet,

The Exercises:

The exercises at higher levels should be such as to elicit a cognitive participation of the student; so more 'cloze' type passages should be set for training. A 'cloze' test is constructed by omitting every nth word through a passage and substituting in their places blanks of a standard length. The reader has to anticipate meaning from the context and supply the right words. "What we need, if we are to teach English as a 'library language' is pre-eminently a grammar of the written ianguage; a grammar besides, that accounts for the endles surface manifestations of the language in terms of a relatively small number of learnable rules-in short, a grammer based on the T. G, model (Narayanaswamy, 1973).

The following Table (No. 1) will show the nature of exercises regularly offered under different sections (other than relating to syntax; for syntax, please refer to Vol. VIII No. 3-P pp.68) of the lessons offered in the first course as a preparation for the second and third courses. If 'reading' is a process of 'decoding' a communicated matter, 'writing' is a reverse process, one of 'encoding' an information in suitable forms and in a suitable manner. So the exercises given under different sections of the lessons offered in the reading course should be such as to give some training in productive (writing and speaking) English. The following lesson will show how an attempt has been made to achieve the objectives of reading, and incidentally the basic objectives of productive English,

TABLE I

The content of exercises in each lesson unit (in Eng. 101) for improving the competency

in Reading (in Eng. 102)

	'B'-Vocabulary and usage	'C'–Discoursal logic and cohesion	E-Analysis and Synthesis	G-Spelling-pronunciation
1.	Examples of usage (10 pairs of misused words) in technical contexts.	Analysis of the title (topic) and sub-topics (given and implied)	Nominal phrases-Post head word (HW) modifications.	New (not present in L1) consonants and vowels inititiral, medialand final positions.
2.	Analysis of word structures (prefixes, suffixes and root words)	Key statements in each paragraph by means of questions.	Nominal phrases-Pre-head word (HW) modifications.	Consonant clusters in initial, medial and final positions
3.	Synonyms and antonyms.	Key words from each paragraph.	Relative and factive embeddings.	dipthongs and unstressed vowels in initial, medial and final position

	'B-Vocabulary and usage	'C-Discoursal logic and cohesion	E-Analysis and Synthesis	G-Spelling-pronunciation
4.	Collocations and classification of words.	Cohesive references—pronouns and proper names.	Simple topicalisations and topicalisations by clauses.	Homonymy, homographs and stress.
5.	Words and their semantic fields (technical and non-technical).	Cohesion between the first and last sentences of each paragraph.	Participial embeddings.	inflectional forms and stress.
6.	Multiple-meanings and contexts.	Use of logical, analogical connectives and punctuations in a connected discourse.	Infinitive embeddings.	breath-groups, tonic and change in pitch.

Section 'A'—relates to Pre-reading strategy, reading material and Post-reading evaluation.

Section 'D'—relates to exercises in syntax as per the linguistic aims of Eng. 101.

Section 'F'—relates to Group Discussion.

Section 'H'—relates to 'Reference study'.

A3 The Reading Material:

HOW PLANTS SENSE GRAVITY

Abstract (The gravity or, to give it its proper name geotropic sense of plants	is	vita]	to their existence, but
how do plants	perceive	gravity ?	
Professor Audus of Bedford College London	believes	in common with other research workers	that
some higher plants at least	detect	gravity	by organs very similar to those
	used	for the same purpose	in shrimps and other crustacea
1. These marine creatures	detect	the direction of the pull of gravity	by organs
	called	statholiths,	tiny spherical chambers which
the shrimps	partly filled with	sand grains	
As the shrimp	swims about	different angles	
the grains of sand	roll around and press against at	at different parts of the inside of the chamber	
Nerves supplying the chambers walls	report	the stimulus back	to the brain, which
the shrimp	works out	which way up	
2. It	is		
	has been elagently proved	that	
this system		responsible for gravity perception	
			by replacing the the sand in shrimp tanks with the iron filings

A3 The Reading Material:

HOW PLANTS SENSE GRAVITY

The shrimps	fill	their statholiths	with these instead of sandgrains
If a magnet	is then moved around	the tank	
the swimming shrimp	becomes hoplessly confused		
3. For some time botanists	have suspected	that	in growing plants
the place of sand grains	is taken	by grains of starch	
These, which	are conspicuously (*clearly*)	visible	in the growing regions of stems and roots where
the response to gravity	occurs,		
	could,		
it	has been suggested	by falling against one or another part of the cell wall	under the influence of gravity,
	provide	the required receptor.	
4. When the starch gains	press against	one or another of the wall of the box-like plant cell,	
they	must somehow stimulate	the formation of a chemical messenger, a plant hormone	which
	in turn stimulates	one or the other side of the stem or root	to grow faster thus producing the degree of curvature required.

A3 The Reading Material: HOW PLANTS SENSE GRAVITY

5. Professor Audus	has made	a model of the system, a plastic box with plastic pellets,	to stimulate starch graing, floating in a viscous oil only slightly less dense than the pellets, which
	represents	the protoplasm	
the starch grains	float in	with this model	
he	demonstrates	how	
different degrees of tilt from the vertical	will make	the starch grains	
	roll to and stock up against (*forming a heap*)	the walls of the cell,	thus providing different degrees of stimulus for the production of different amounts of plant growth hormone that
	cause	the stem or root	to grow through particular curves.
6. The latest evidence for the theory	is	that	
some plants in which starch grains	are completely removed	by starch-dissolving chemicals	

A3 The Reading Material:

HOW PLANTS SENSE GRAVITY

But puzzles and exceptions	lose remain	their ability	to respond to gravity
Some plants	do not show	any change	after this treatment.
And the bracket fungi			
which	grow horizontally	on trees and	which
	clearly have	a very efficienty gravity sense	
	do not apparently synthesise	starch	at all.
			so as in the animal world,
it	seems likely	that	
there	are	a number of separate systems	to be found in plants and fungi
	involved	in gravity perception.	
It	is	conceivable	that
if this	is	so	
it	could have	practical applications.	
It	might be	possible	to develop a chemical fungicide which
	disrupt (*break*)	the gravity sense of fungi	and so
	kill off	fungal parasites	without in any way affecting the different gravity receptors to be found in crop plants.

The reader's attention is drawn to Table 2 in Vol. IX, No. 1 for a knowledge of the sequential position of the following lesson in the reading course. This lesson on 'Collocations' follows those on 'Terminological and Non-terminological' words and 'Synonyms and Antonyms' and is followed by a lesson on "Phrases and Idioms In respect of developing Library Reading Orientation, this lesson. 'Analyse the Title of Lesson' follows the lessons on 'Read the Introduction' and Read the Chapter Headings and Index' and is followed by the lesson on 'Read the Blurb and a Chapter". The method of instruction is built into the lesson itself so that it may be fruitfully exploited by every teacher of English. Sections A, B and G are covered in two theory classes (one hour each) and the rest in one practical class of three hours. Each lesson is supplied with a key for the exercises.

A New Way of Presentation:

The first two lessons are presented under three columns, each column with one phrase unit like the following so that the students may follow easily the directions given under A2 of the lesson and learn 'skimmed reading'. Glossing in italicised lower types) is done in respective places.

This material (NP)
is arranged (Verbal
group)
in phrases. (Pp+NP)
Each line
should be read
as 'one unit'.
These lines of print
are no longer than
(of)

some single words
You can read
longer words as one unit
Then, each unit
may represent
(stand for)
one complete thought unit
It is important (sc)
that you learn (sc)
to read meaningfully.

The next two lessons are presented in the manner of the following lesson. The phrase units are presented linearly, but with segmental demarcations so that the students may internalise broad generalisations on linguistic probabilities. In the fifth and sixth lessons, the units are brought closer but without permitting

the lines to run on. The last two lessons are presented in the normal form of regular passages in print. The advantages of this method are immense.

'Analyse the Title of the lesson'

(Hypothetical thinking) (Collocations)

A. Pre-reading Motivation and Orientation :

The following passage is taken from "*SPECTRUM* - British Science News", a journal published from England, It is a brief scientific report written by a scientist for scientists. The title of the passage is "How plants sense gravity". You should analyse the words in the title of the lesson as it would help you recall to your mind all you know on the subject. This is an important step in developing a good reading method. This passage reports an experiment conducted for finding out if plants also sense gravity. and discusses why this information is necessary for scientists, Please recall to your mind what you know already on the subject by answering the following questions based on the words in the title of the lesson,

i) Who discovered the principle of gravity ?

ii) Give a few key words that go with gravity and gravitational force.

iii) Do trees and plants normally grow vertically ? Why do they do so ?

iv) Assume that coconut trees have no sense of gravity. State how would they grow then.

What would be its result ?

v) Do fish have organs to sense 'gravity'? Please reason out your answer.

vi) A list of nouns is given below : Please classify them into those that describe

i) the parts of plants, ii) other life systems dependent on the plants and iii), human organs used for feeling sensations.

a) eye	g) hand	m) moss	s) stem
b) butter-fly	h) trunk	n) cochlea	t) roots
c) ear	i) skin	o) grain	u) fungus
d) flower	j) bark	p) protoplasm	v) parasite
e) water	k) shrub	q) creeper	w) moss
f) branch	l) leaf-nerves	r) cells	x) leaves.

A2. Skimming for Reading Strategy :

i) Please skim through the passage four times, each time allowing your eyes to scan for each category of the following linguistic cues,

1. Nominal Phrases :

a) Titles, sub-titles, Proper names and their modifiers, b) Headwords in subject position and their modifiers and c) Nouns in object position.

2. Verbal phrases :

a) Verbal groups : their tense and voice.

b) Negatives and other modifiers and

c) Verbals with infinitives and gerunds.

3. Cohesive features :

a) markers of i) comparatives ii) alternatives iii) includers and iv) excluders, b) logical connecters like, 'therefore, so, but, if, etc. and c) analogical connectors like, 'like, as, in accordance with', etc.

4. Structural cues:

a) interrogatives and imperatives b) statements beginning with, "It is......" and factive clauses c) sentence modifiers, and punctuations.

A2. ii) Please go through the questions given under A4 and find out if you can answer them on the basis of your skimmed reading. Please try to get mentally into the 'content' of the passage from the questions themselves. Then decide on the nature of your reading strategy and go through the passage looking for answers for questions given under A4. ii.

A3. The Reading Material:

4. Post-skimming/reading Evaluation:

i) Please answer the following questions (on form and nature):

1. State which paragraph (numbered) contains a) a large sized nominal phrases, b) a large number of "it is... .. sentences/and factive clauses, c) a large number of phrases denoting location (place), time, etc. and d) phrases in the pre-subject position.

2. State which paragraph contains, a) a large member of new words, b) a large number of technical words, c) a large number of prepositionals and d) a large number of quotations.

3. State which paragraph contains, a) a large number of comparatives. b) a large number of logical connectors. c) a large number of analogical connectors. d) a large number of relative embeddings.

4. State what may be the benefit you may derive from reading the passage :

   a) learn a new experimental method or a practical application.

   b) acquire new knowledge for practical application.

   c) learn an effective method of communication of known information.

   d) Understand a new concept or an all-inclutive generalisation.

A4. ii) **Questions on Terminal knowledge :**

1. With what does the shrimp normally fill its statholiths? Why ?

2. What work of the experimenter made the shrimp lose its sense of gravity?

3. What are the equivalents in the cells of plants for the sand grains and the sea-water by which the shrimps perceive gravity ?

4. Why should the viscous oil be slightly less dense than the pellets, in the experiment ?

5. Draw a diagram of the. 'model' which Professor Audus built for the experiment.

6. What are the advantages of destroying the sense of gravity of mosses and parasitical plants?

B. **Exercises in vocabulary and usage (collocations) :**

1. Words and phrases which always go together are called 'collocations'. Their associated occurrences may take place in terms of the context of i) a subject (field of study ii) social occasion, iii) a cultural group and iv) semantic (meaning) agreements. A knowledge of collocations will

help you know in advance what combinations of words are possible and may occur in a given discourse. This will help you read fast. While writing, you should avoid using words and structures which do not collocate in a given context.

Please read the following examples and identify the collocational logic (agreement). IW

a) The *dog barks* The *cat mews.* (s-v)

b) The North pole *repels* the north pole, but *attracts* the south pole. (v-o)

c) I want two sets of *cup* and *saucer.*

B2. Please read the following lists and put a round over the word which does not go well with the other words in some way. b) Please note the words which collocate in one context, but do not collocate in another context (some words may collocate in several contexts), IW

i. a) engine b) coal c) stem d) rails e) aeroplane.

a) phototropism, b) geotropism c) hydrotropism d) transmission e) photosynthesis.

iii) a) idli b) sambar c) chutni d) carbohydrates. e) gingelly oil.

iv) a) odour b) aroma c) fragrance d) perfume e) paper

v) a) Osmosis, b) membrane c) pressure d) magnet e) density.

vi) a) photosynthesis b) transmission c) carbohydrates d) chlorine e) green leaves.

3. A sense of collocation gives you an ability to get at complete words even from incomplete cues, and other redundant cues of the topic of discourse, Please read the following examples and then complete the given exercise. IW

Example: a) It is fr——zing cold (adjectival modifier) (free zing).

b) cup and s——r (collective noun) (saucer),

c) Cattle shed : Pig——(referential) (sty)

d) Up and——(adverbial phrase) (down)

e) The donkey——(Topic and verb) (brays)

f) He smoked——regularly (verb and object) (cigarettes).

g) He looked——the dictionary whenever he is in——.

(context) (up) the——in (doubt).

As the shrimp swims at different ang—i—s, the grains of sand roll aro ii—d the chamber. This system is responsible for gravity per iii—n. These are con—iv ly visible in the growing reg——v of stems and——vi. How do plants ——vii gravity ?

4. Please find out which 'key words' would suitably fill the given blanks in the following sentences. You must match your choice with redundant cues of the formal situation (not informal) of communication. (you will also realise that there are no synonyms in science), IW

i) When a magnet——around. the swimming shrimp becomes hopelessly confused a) moves b) is moved c) is taken d) is carried (Topic-v)

ii) Nerves connecting the chamber walls report the—— back to the brain, which works out which way up the

shrimp is. a) stimulant b) effect c) stimulus d) information, (V - O)

iii) The pressure of the starch grains——iii the formation of a ehemical messenger, a plant——iv which in turn stimulates one or the other side of the stem or root to grow faster, thus producing the——v of curvature required.

iii. a) stimulates b) induces c) works for d) triggers

iv. a) chemical b) hormone c) substance d) sap

v. a) angle b) form c) degree d) shape

5. Please fill in the blanks properly; the clues for words are redundant in the passage itself. You must learn to use contextual redundancies for developing linguistic expectancies for nouns, pronouns, adjectives etc,, GW

Example: She —i—the soup. As—ii—required a little salt——iii——added——iv——more. i) tasted ii) it iii) she, iv) some.

Prof, Audus has—a—a model of this system with this ——b——he demonstrates how gravity is perceived.

Starch grains probably—c—the plants and trees in sensing the——d. The latest evidence about the theory of——e is that some plants in which starch grains are completely—f—by—starch dissolving—g—loss—h—— ability to respond to——i ——.

It might be possible to develop a chemical fungicide which would—j—the gravity sense of fungi and so kill off——k——parasites without in any way——l the different——m——receptors to be found in crop——n.

6. Effective communication depends on the extent to which words fit in with the readers' (and listeners' in speech contexts) expectations. Some combinations may mean

one thing to some people and another thing to other people. One should be aware of these variations which are the result of cultural differences.

'Breakfast' means 'bacon and eggs' for the English, and 'coffee and toast' for the Americans.

But, in writings in science, the differences are the result of differences in the levels of technical knowledge. Please read the following examples and rewrite the sentences replacing the italicised combinations with phrases (non terminological) suitable for the lay public. GW

i.g ,) He is an *odd sort* of man: He is *queer in many ways.* He is an *uncommon* man.

a) *Geotropic sense of plants* is *vital* to their existence.

b) Grains of starch are *conspicuously visible* in the growing regions of stems and roots.

7. When 'collocations' belonging to one field are used in another field, they may act as metaphors. In technical writing, metaphors are normally avoided. Please fill in the blanks with words suitable to different contexts, like a) the context of metaphorical writing B) the context of technical writing :and C) the context of popular writing. You will note that the words appear to be synonyms but each word is context-bound.

Example: He———them with no effect.

a) 'roared at (The lion roars) - a metaphorical usage.

b) 'tried to pull them up' (pull up the reins of the horse)- a technical idiom.

c) shouted at - a popular usage,

i) The marine creatures——the direction by organs called statholiths.

a) find out b) detect c) discover d) invent e) survey i) A——B——C ——.

ii) How do plants——gravity ?

a) see b) understand c) perceive d) sense e) feel ii) A——B ——C——.

iii) Professor Audus has made a model of the system. plastic box with plastic pellets, to——starch grains, floating in a viscous oil a) imitate b) mimic c) simulate d) pretend for e) represent iii) A——B——C.

8. In certain collocations, words (acting as metaphors) may contradict one another and make for amusing readings. One should learn to identify these combination, interpret them properly and correct them accordingly. Please correct the following sentences. GW

Example: 1. He *watered* the plants with the *fire* of his imag i nation.

2. The *growth activaters* work on plants as surely and steadily as *caterpillars.*

3. The *man gave birth* to a childish idea.

9. Please read the following examples and note that each phrase has a specific meaning in specific contexts. You may come across similar combinations in your books, You should learn to interpret these combinations properly, Please read the following examples, please mark the sentence in which the italicised word is used in the same meaning as is signalled in the sentence 'M'.

a) White paper (Political context) - an important report.

b) White coal - hydro - electric power.

c) White lie - forgivable excuse.

d) White night - sleepless night.

e) White noise - used in acoustic engineering,

(To be continued)

A NEW STRATEGY FOR THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS

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"The limits of my language", said the philosopher Wittgenstein, "are the the limits of my knowledge". Audiovisual aids help overcome the constraints of language in the teaching-learning process. In the teaching of English in India, the English language itself is the target of the teaching process. The Direct Method namely teaching English without the use of the vernacular in the classroom, is the received method in our educational system. English words and sentence structure are to be taught to the pupils directly, by simulating the appropriate contexts in the classroom. Of course a study conducted in Baroda some time ago unsettled once again the controversy about the relative efficacy of the Direct Method over the indirect Method that utilises the knowledge of the vernacular language which a pupil brings to the school from his home. Unpartriotic as it may sound, very few of our Indian languages match the rich vocabulary range of English. Inevitably the limits of my language become the limit of my knowledge *of English.* Thus, in either of the methods, the use of aids is indispensable if the pupil is to gain the benefits of the larger resources of the English language.

The utility aim, as against the culture aim. informs more and more every revision of the English syllabus. In Tamil Nadu, even at the graduate level English has become a functional subject. The aim is to improve the language skills of the educated rather than his literary sensibility. As he finishes his college course he must be equipped with a repertoire of language skills appropriate to the level of thinking demanded by his course.

Where this is the case, the resistance in the 'literary' quarters against the utilisation of the resources of communication technology in the teaching of English is beside the point. Certainly at the lower levels where the course content is exclusively oriented to the four language skills–listening, speaking, reading and writing, the use of well-planned and appropriate aids will go a long way in laying a firmer foundation for building a classical literary edifice or for taking off into scientific thinking as the case may be.

At present most of the teacher training courses do include some topics on Audiovisual Aids. And the prospective teacher is required to prepare some pieces of visual aids as a part of his practical work. The idea behind is to stimulate creativity and the spirit of resourceful improvisation in the teacher-to-be. This requirement degenerates in practice into the procurement and presentation of shop-made showpieces. The requirement makes unequal demands on the trainees depending on their individual dexterity. Unless resourcefulness in ideas for improvisation are matched by dexterity or the other way about the results are never pedagogically sound. And there is little carry over of this spirit of improvisation once the trainee gets into the rut of the regular teaching profession. The entire programme becomes a sterile exercise.

The received method of teaching English—the Direct Method—banks heavily upon Situational Techniques. In order to make the pupils learn a unit the teacher can adopt anyone of the following strategies: take them into the real life situation; partially substitute for the situation with the help of aids: draw upon common cultural heritages like epics and/or explain in English the elements of the situation and ask the pupils to imagine themselves to be in the situation. Of the four the second, viz., substituting partially with aids. is the best in terms of feasibility, time and cost effectiveness. But this strategy has gone by the board for want of logistic support services from the system. like differential incentives for teacher who innovate improvise and utilise appropriate aids. and on account of uneven resourcefulness among

teachers in the handicraft skills of aid preparation. Now the remedy is to build up the logistic support services.

The ideal would be to get up more or less a permanent workshop of audiovisual experts, experts in the teaching of English experienced drawing masters and innovative teachers of English The workshop must take up each word in the vocabulary list and each sentence structure and design a set of aids for each. The set must be tried out on a wide sample of the target population for its differential effectiveness in the teaching of the particular unit and thus a feed back must be obtained. Simultaneously prospective—the average and below average teachers, especially, must be asked to use the aid and report their reactions. Consolidating all these feedbacks the set of aids must thus be standardised, Then it must be produced on a mass scale and distributed to all schools, Batches of teachers must be properly trained in the use of the set.

For the teaching of certain sentence structures—especially those involving certain verbs and different tenses thereof—film strips and films are the best aids. A teacher can walk and say concurrently 'I am walking'. But he cannot laugh and say concurrentiy 'I am laughing', Thus at higher levels there is an acute need of six-dimensional aids (three dimensions of space and three dimensions of time) that can clarify at one stroke the application of complex sentence structures to life-like situations.

Certainly organisational changes may be necessary to make the use of such projective aids more economical; The non-graded system can be followed for the English classes. Pupiis can be divided into two groups—the high group consisting of higher standards and the low group consisting of lower standards, One common period in the time table may be set apart for English for each of the groups. The work load on the teachers can be redistributed—say one can be looking after the operation of the aids one may supervise, one can give drills and exercises and one may be assigned remedial sessions.

Thus every school must have an integrated set of teaching aids covering every word in the vocabulary list and every sentence structure and teaching point. And every teacher must be thoroughly trained in the use of the aids. Textbooks may be rewritten with this end in view. The aids may be numbered serially, indicating the word or structure they are meant for. The source book for the teacher must have cross references to the serial number of the aid to be used. Appropriate drill and exercises material that dovetail into the lesson content and aids type can be designed.

Every school must set apart a big room as English Laboratory where the hardware of the aids can be fixed, the software is properly stored up and where students assemble during the English periods.

The programme of course involves sizeable initial investment, by way of the support of the permanent workshop, try out, standardisation and mass production of the aids. But in terms of cost effectiveness the use of such integrated set of aids will go a long way in enhancing the standard of English, especially in transfer effect to day to day situations. At present the essays and summaries that students blindly get by heart have little spill over value into their day to day life. It is for agencies like the Central Institute of English to take up the matter—to start with as a pilot project in a specific area for the lower standards.

SLANG

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1. Etymology

The etymology of the word Slang has not been traced or firmly established. Eric Partridge cites Dr. Bradley, H. C. K. Wyld and Earnest Weekly who hold the view that slang is cognate with Norse "slengjeord" ("a new slang word"). He himself suggests that slang is "language slung about." The word might have been a deliberate perversion of "slung". He quotes the line "the bold words that (he) did sling" (1400) to lend support to his theory. Unconventional expressions like "to sling words/language" meaning "to talk" and "sling off at" meaning "jeer or taunt", carry the colloquial echo of the word "slang". The etymology of the word, however, is obscure and a matter of conjecture.

2. Synonyms and Dictionaries

Slang is a word of cant origin. In the 18th century, slang and cant were identical in sense. The word 'cant' has since assumed a different colouring, though it retains its original sense in certain expressions or contexts. In the 18th century, slang was the language of those engaged in nefarious activities like kidnapping and thieving. Three dictionaries listing cant words were published—*Dictionary of the canting crew.* (1700, anonymous) *A New Canting Dictionary* (1725 anonymous), *Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue* by Grose (1785), Before 1850, slang was a generic term to signify all "non-standard English except dialect" (Eric Partridge). In the 19th century, slang had three synonyms, 'lingo', 'jargon', and argot'.

3. Motives Underlying the use of slang

H. W. Fowler says "Slang is the diction that results from the favourite game, among the young and lively, of playing with words and renaming things and actions; some invent new words

or mutilate or misapply the old for the pleasure of novelty and others catch up such words for the pleasure of being in the fashion. Many slang words and phrases perish, a few establish themselves; in either case, they are accounted unfit for literary use". Eric Partridge has listed sixteen reasons for the use of slang. The impulses, to mention a few, that prompt its employment are unconventionality, topicality, vivacity of expression, intimacy of communication, individuality and verbal ingenuity and inventiveness. Slang is "the plain man's poetry" (Earle Welby). The desire for slang is a protest against staleness in expression.

4. Attitude to slang

The general attitude to slang through the centuries has been shifting. Its reception was mixed and at no period was its use universally or entirely supported or deprecated. The word came into use in 1756. Dr. Johnson dismissed slang words as "low" and excluded them from his dictionary. "The language of slang is the conversation of fools" 1825. (J. P. Thomas quoted by Eric Partridge) "While slang is essentially part of familiar and colloquial speech, it is not necessarily incorrect or vulgar in its proper place" (H. C. K. Wyld quoted E. Partridge). "As style is the great antiseptic, so slang is the great corrupting matter" Fowler-King's English. "Low, vulgar, unmeaning language" Webster 1828 (A. C. Baugh). The two definitions given in O.E.D. illustrate the difference in attitude. a) "The special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a *low and disreputable character. Language of a low vulgar type*," b) "language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense '. Definition (b), according to A. C. Baugh, illustrates the attitude prevalent in 1911. "very informal usage in vocabulary and idiom that is characteristically more metaphorical, playful, elliptical, vivid and ephemeral than ordinary language. Speech and writing characterised by the use of vulgar and socially taboo vocabulary and idiomatic expressions" (The Random House Dictionary of the English Language.)

Slang and Standard Speech

It is not as if slang words are permanently condemned to their low or disreputable status. Many of them have found their way into standard vocabulary. "Slang is a kind of vagabond language, always lying on the outskirts of legitimate speech, *but continually straying or forcing their way into the most respectable community.*" (Greenough and Kittredge) It is difficult to determine when exactly a slang word qualifies to become respectable. In the process of passing into the common stock of accepted words, slang words have undergone change of meaning and/or shed their original disreputable associations. There are in modern English many words, which are taken for granted and whose cant or 'low' origin is not even suspected. (eg) fun (original meaning-a trick to cheat) chap (a dealer in stolen goods), bet, bogus, coax, enthusiasm, filch, flippant, flimsy, humbug, kid, pinch, pluck, sham, shabby, simpleton, simper, what on earth.

6. Conclusion

In the present day, the popular Press and Films facilitate the circulation of slang terms, The breakdown of social barriers is another factor in promoting their spread. Slang lends a touch of novelty, familiarity and snappiness to speech and writing and makes communication chatty, effective, easy and informal. The influence of slang is on the increase and has to be reckoned with in any objective study of the English vocabulary. Slang, says A. C. Baugh, will be a source from which English will continue to be fed in the future.

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STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND ENGLISH TEACHING

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(1) Pedagogic peroration is very often mistaken for good teaching of English. The apparently profoundly learned activity of delivering an hour-long lecture on a given topic no doubt mystifies the young audience but it is not sure whether it enlightens or improves it. Lecturing is for the most part undirectional. If any knowledge results in the process, it is merely accidental.

(2) "Spare the detail and spoil the boy" is the golden maxim. The Lecturer wants to say everything that could possibly be said on the subject. He feels satisfied if he fills each hour with sixty minutes worth of talk leaving his poor listeners panting for breath. No wonder the student finds the class something irrelevant to him. In Jean Forrester's book, "*Teaching without lecturing*" many useful hints are given as to how students can be involved even in large classes with the teacher functioning always in the background prompting, directing and guiding them. In the outmoded lecture method, the teacher never troubles himself to find out how much of his teaching has really gone home.

(3) It is believed that even in the existing circumstances with their attendant limitations like unwieldy classes, insuffici-

ently motivated boys, woefully low standards, varying degrees of intellectual equipment of the students and above all, the race "for finishing the portions" some amount of student participation is possible and inevitable.

(4) Even in the West, the accent is gradually being shifted from lecturing to class room group discussions, seminars, quiz type questions and answers, and other activities. Apathy among the boys against participation and other psychological inhibitions can be got over with a little resourcefulness and understanding on the part of the teacher.

(5) One of the first steps by which an increasing amount of student participation can be brought about is to make the boys read the prescribed text in the class. Reading the text, let alone reading anything is on the decline. The average speed of reading of a pre-degree student is only 60 words per minute, whereas it should at least be 250 words per minute.

(6) While teaching the mere text, the teacher may stop with summarising the main ideas in a given page and putting them clearly on the blackboard. Difficult words and phrases may be glossed by him in the beginning. The next task of the teacher will be to frame careful comprehension questions which will cover all the salient points of the lesson. Care must be taken to devise two sets of questions one for the "above" and one for the 'below' average boys. Though silent reading is ideal, there are some snags here. Students may be chosen at random to do loud reading of the text, the teacher elaborating the cruxes of the text. Each boy should be instructed to bring a dictionary to the class.

(7) The whole class can be divided into two or three groups - one group asking the other group - meanings of words, one - word substitutes, antonyms or other searching questions in the lesson. It is time that intellectual spoon-feeding was given farewell.

(8) Whatever the teacher would like to say in an hour can be reconstructed from the answers to questions given by the boys themselves. The general complaint against this method is that most of the boys are incapable of expression. Some of the students may be apathetic. A mediocre student can be made to shed his diffidence by being encouraged to talk. He might be asked to repeat the correct answers provided by his better counterparts. The teacher could locate his area of difficulty and give him sufficient drill in the specific area either oral or written.

(9) Even in teaching a difficult subject such as poetry some amount of student participation is possible. Students may be asked to read the poem in the class. The line by-line paraphrase of a poem seems to take away the charm since it is a child of the poets unified imagination. To apply a rational code to something born of the white-hot imagination of a poet is an indequate process. Poem-reading must be a kind of problem-solving.

10. The teacher should stop with presenting the main Drama of the poem briefly and leave the students to find its beauty—such as felicity of diction, words charged with musical quality images and similes connected with the main idea and so on.

11. It is felt that in grammar and Composition maximum student involvement is possible Guided letter writing makes them think about what they are going to write well in advance. The bare outline of the letter may be put on the board.

12. In teaching grammar, the teacher may bring about participation by means of "guided" questions and "free" questions. For instance, while teaching conditional sentences, the teacher could put simple questions like, "What will you do if your alarm goes off tommorrow morning ?" The expected answer is some such thing as : "If the alarm goes off, I will get up." The teacher presents the idea of the future tense in the answer even while putting the question At a later stage, free questions like, "When will you repay the money ?" may be put. The boys are expected to answer "I will repay the money if I get it". If such oral drilling is given, students are left to observe the underlying grammatical principles themselves.

13. The idea of student participation must be taken in the right spirit and even if there are initial hurdles, it should be given a fair trial. There can be little doubt that it is the only means whereby a college class may be made interesting and purposeful.

Hearty Greetings

&

Good Wishes

to all the members
of The English Language Teachers
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